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A Sketch of the Religious History of the Negroes
in the South

By

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A SKETCH OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE NEGROES IN THE SOUTH

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(Read December 31, 1912)

“ABOUT the last of August came in a Dutch man of warre that sold us twenty negars.” Thus reads the ancient official record which chronicles in those few words one of the most fateful events that has found place in the annals of our country, the introduction of African slavery. The year was 1619, and the place was the little colony of Jamestown, then in the thirteenth year of its existence. The institution at once took root downward and bore fruit upward. The trade rapidly grew and the market enlarged despite many earnest protests, until throughout the thirteen colonies ready sale was found for all the slaves that were offered. The traffic continued for one hundred and eighty-nine years, and when it was finally suppressed in 1808, there was a slave population in the United States numbering considerably over one million. From the first the most popular market was in the South, and ultimately the institution became localized in that section. This was not because of difference of mental and moral attitude in the two sections, but because of different climatic and economic conditions.

These imported slaves belonged ethnologically to the negro race as distinguished from the other races that inhabit Africa. The author of an article in the American Encyclopedia says,

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The term negro denotes an ideal type distinguished by certain physical characters, such as are seen in the people of the coast of Guinea, viz.,—black skin, woolly hair, flat nose, thick everted lips, and a prognathous form of skull. Negroes occupy about one half of Africa, excluding the northern and southern extremities. Out of Africa they are found throughout America and the West Indies.

James Anthony Froude, in depicting the character of the slave population of the West Indies says: "Evidently they belonged to a race far inferior to the Zulus and Caffres whom I had known in South Africa. They would have been slaves in their own country, if they had not been brought to ours; and at the worst had lost nothing by the change." Evidence of the extreme degradation of the Africans who were brought to our shores is furnished by the fact that the traders secured their cargo through the agency of the Africans themselves. It was their own flesh and blood who tore the slaves away from their miserable homes, burning their villages, chasing them down, mutilating and destroying many to gratify their selfish greed by selling into bondage those whom they managed to take alive.

It is well to bear in mind that American slavery dealt with one of the lowest orders of the human family. The law of evolution, which is credited by some of our modern scientists with an energy that is well-nigh, if not altogether, equal to achieving the miracle of creation, seems to have given up its task in despair in the case of the African negro. What he was when he first emerged into the light of history that he is to-day, the same low savage, living usually in a state of nudity, and under the power of crude and debasing superstitions. He has never evolved any national organization, nor any system of laws, nor any settled family life. He has never evolved a schoolhouse, nor a text-book, nor even an alphabet out of which a book might be made. This is not saying that he is incapable of development. It has

been demonstrated *ex abundante* that he is capable of indefinite development. But he seems incapable of self-development. He does not embody in himself any law of evolution. Stimulus and guidance must come from without.

In studying the religious history of these people in their new home, it will be in the interest of clearness to divide the history into three periods: First, the Colonial period, second, the period between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War; third, the period since the Civil War. These were epoch-marking periods in the history of our country, and the changes which they introduced had much influence over the lives of the colored population.

I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The chief source of data of this period is *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, by Rev. Charles Colcock Jones, D.D., Savannah, Ga., 1842. Dr. Jones was a minister of the Presbyterian Church in the South. He was distinguished for intellectual gifts and attainments, and for saintliness of character. He was an ardent friend of the slaves, devoted much time to evangelistic work among them, and prepared and published for use in their religious instruction a most admirable and widely used catechism.

The Colonial period covers 157 years. During this time the number of slaves increased from twenty to 500,000. As nearly as can be ascertained, these were distributed among the thirteen colonies as follows: Massachusetts, 3500; Rhode Island, 4373; Connecticut, 6000; New Hampshire, 659; New York, 15,000; New Jersey, 7600; Delaware, 9000; Pennsylvania, 10,000; Maryland, 80,000; Virginia, 165,000; North Carolina, 75,000; South Carolina, 110,000; Georgia, 16,000; making a total of 502,132. Of this total, 446,000 were in the five southern colonies of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. In the other eight colonies, the numbers were relatively so few that their

evangelization did not constitute a distinct problem, or if so, it was not one of great magnitude. There are indications that from the first introduction of slaves into the New England colonies, efforts were made for their conversion. The religious spirit was intense in these colonies, and they were more richly supplied with the means of grace. However, the efforts put forth in behalf of the slaves were not such as to satisfy tender consciences. John Eliot and Cotton Mather complain that no more was done, and assign as one reason for the neglect of the religious instruction of the slaves the "fear of thereby losing the benefit of their vassalage." This fear was common throughout the colonies. From medieval times the faith of the Church had been that it was proper to enslave heathen people, but not Christian. It seemed to follow logically that when heathen slaves were converted they should be manumitted. Hence the thrifty colonists, having invested their money in slaves, and having enjoyed the profits of their labor for a time, were reluctant to seek their conversion. This might mean the loss of their investments. Specific action was taken in some of the colonies to allay this fear. For instance, a law was enacted in Virginia in 1667, declaring: "Baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom, in order that divers masters freed from this doubt may more carefully endeavor the propagation of christianity." The fear was not entirely allayed until an opinion was secured from his majesty's attorney and solicitor-generals in the early part of the eighteenth century. This opinion, signed by these two distinguished legal lights, was distributed widely through the colonies. Thus a serious obstacle was removed, and presumably "divers masters more carefully endeavored the propagation of Christianity."

During this period, the most lively interest in the religious welfare of the slaves was manifested by the Christians of Great Britain. It is not uncommon for sympathy for a degraded people to increase in proportion to distance.

The explanation is that sympathy at a distance is not chilled by contact with the degraded people, with those whose coarse natures, offensive habits, uncouth appearance, and vicious propensities are a source of constant irritation. Perhaps the first active expression of this sympathy was in a pamphlet by Richard Baxter, bearing date 1673. This pamphlet contained "directions to those masters in foreign plantations who have negroes and other slaves; being a solution of several cases about them." Wide circulation was given to this pamphlet among those for whom it was designed and it is believed that much good was accomplished by it. Far more effective efforts, however, were put forth by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." This society was organized under William III, June 16, 1701. Thomas Tenison, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, was appointed by his majesty the first president. The society was patronized by the king and all the dignitaries of the Church of England. The work of the society consisted of three great branches: "The care and instruction of all the church's own people settled in the colonies; the conversion of the Indian savages; and the conversion of the negroes." Very naturally the society acted on the maxim that the "Children must first be fed." So many of these were destitute that after they had been only partially and even meagerly supplied, little more than crumbs was left for the poor Indians and negroes. The first missionary of this society, Rev. Samuel Thomas, was sent to South Carolina in 1702. In reporting his labors to the society he said that he "had taken much pains also in instructing the negroes, and had learned 20 of them to read." His successor in 1706 was Dr. LeJeu. He reports that he "found parents and masters indued with much good-will and a ready disposition to have their children and servants taught the christian religion," and further that he "had baptized many negroes and indian slaves." Dr. LeJeu was probably disposed to paint in roseate hues, as he had but

eight negro communicants at the end of his eight years of service.

Missionaries from this society labored in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, and in the New England colonies; all of whom it seems devoted a part of their time to the spiritual good of the negroes. A school was established in New York City in 1704, at which date it was computed that there were 1500 negro and Indian slaves in the city. Mr. Elias Neau was appointed catechist. It is reported that many negroes were instructed and baptized. This school was continued after Mr. Neau's death in 1722 for several years with considerable success. Dr. Frederick Dalcho, in his *History of South Carolina*, relates that through the influences and exertions of Commissary Garden a schoolhouse was built in Charleston by private subscription, and opened in 1742. The Commissary purchased at the expense of the society two negro boys, to whom were given the baptismal names of Harry and Andrew. They were placed in the school, and when sufficiently qualified were made teachers. Fifteen years from the opening of the school, the society was informed that it was still flourishing and full of children. Five years later it was closed for the reason that Andrew had died and Harry had gone to the bad.

The society continued its efforts to advance the cause of religion in the colonies until 1783, when the colonies were separated from the mother country. Throughout this whole period it showed an unabated concern for the souls of the African slaves, frequently admonishing its missionaries to use their best endeavors in their behalf and to stir up the masters to assist in the work. Dr. Tiffany, in his *History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, summing up the labors of this society, says: "It had stimulated and supported missions to the negroes and Indians as well as the white colonists. Its labors were chiefly in those colonies where the church was not established." It was this policy of the society to put forth its

chief energies where the Church was not established that provoked the rather unamiable criticism of Cotton Mather. "The society, very little to their honor," he says, "send forth and support their missionaries to maintain confusion in towns of well instructed Christians, while at the same time whole plantations of the southern colonies, where is perfect paganism, are left wholly uncared for." This statement, to say the least of it, is too sweeping, for, as we have seen, the society did not leave the paganism in the southern colonies "wholly uncared for." But it is true that the negroes were far more numerous and far more in need of missionary service in those colonies where the Church was established, and where according to Dr. Tiffany the society bestowed least of its labors.

In 1738 the Moravian Church, under the lead of Count Zinzendorf, took steps to establish a mission exclusively to the negroes. Dr. Bray of England had left funds to be devoted to the conversion of negro slaves in South Carolina. Those in charge of these funds asked the Count to procure missionaries for them. He objected that the Church of England might hesitate to recognize the ordination of Moravian missionaries. The question was referred to Dr. Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave it as his opinion that "the Moravians being members of an Episcopal Church whose doctrines contained nothing contrary to the Thirty-nine Articles ought not to be denied free access to the heathen." This very cautious answer removed any scruples from the minds of the trustees of the funds, and they forthwith employed two missionaries. These went to Georgia, hoping to be forwarded on their journey by a colony of Moravians who had settled there. But obstacles were thrown in their way and they turned aside from their original purpose. Ten years later certain Moravian Brethren belonging to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, undertook several long and difficult journeys through Maryland, Virginia, and the borders of North Carolina, preaching the Gospel to the negroes. Oppo-

sition developed on the part of the proprietors, who were not willing to have strangers instruct their slaves, as they had their own ministers whom they paid to do this work. Owing to various hindrances, the efforts of the Moravians accomplished little.

While no other Church, during the colonial period, established missions exclusively for the purpose of reaching the slaves, there is evidence that considerable interest was felt on the subject by the ministry generally, and also by Christian laymen who owned slaves. In 1747, Rev. Samuel Davies began his notable work in Virginia. His heart yearned with compassion over the benighted slaves. He estimated that as many as 1000 attended³ on his ministry at his different preaching places.

Never have I been so struck [he wrote] with the appearance of an assembly as when I have glanced an eye to that part of the meeting house where they usually sit, adorned (for so it seemed to me) with so many black countenances eagerly attentive to every word they hear and frequently bathed in tears. A considerable number of them (about a hundred) have been baptized, after a proper time for instruction.

In 1757 he wrote to Dr. Bellamy:

What little success I have lately had has been chiefly among the extremes of gentlemen and negroes. Indeed God has been remarkably working among the latter. I have baptized about 150 adults; and at the last sacramental solemnity, I had the pleasure of seeing the table graced with about sixty black faces.

George Whitefield, on his frequent visits to America, showed a deep concern for the slaves. In an extended letter written from Savannah in 1740, and published in the fourth volume of his works, he excoriated in no mild manner the masters for their treatment of the "poor negroes," censuring them especially for neglecting the souls of their slaves. He showed his concern not in word only, but also in deed

preaching to them with great delight and with powerful effect as often as opportunity offered.

Methodism was introduced into this country in 1766. There was little time, during the period we are now considering, for it to show its attitude towards the slaves. It did not, however, leave itself without a witness. Mr. Pillmore, one of the missionaries sent out by Mr. Wesley in 1769, says: "The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much." From 1773 to 1776 there was a great revival in Virginia, extending down into North Carolina, under the preaching of the Methodists in connection with Mr. Jarratt of the Episcopal Church. Hundreds of blacks attended the meetings along with the whites, sitting in the same chapels and showing by their tears the effect of the Gospel on their hearts, in many cases, doubtless, its saving effect.

The reports and narratives from which the foregoing data are taken make clearly evident that manifold efforts, of quite limited extent it must be admitted, were put forth for the spiritual benefit of the slaves. The owners did something both in the way of personal efforts, and in the way of employing others to instruct them; a few catechetical schools were established for them; some were taught to read and books were distributed among them; they were allowed the rest and privilege of the Sabbath; a good many were baptized and received into the fellowship of the churches; in a word, a general interest, if not as earnest and profound as it should have been, was felt for them throughout the colonies. Such an interest was officially expressed when slavery was introduced into Georgia in 1747. Twenty-three representatives from the different districts met in Savannah, and having elected Major Horton president, they resolved that "the owners of slaves should educate the young, and use every possible means of making religious impressions on the minds of the aged; and that all acts of inhumanity should be punished by the civil authorities." Such expressions of interest were not always followed by corresponding activity.

After the best showing for this period that can be made, the truth must be confessed that the religious interests of the negroes were deplorably neglected. The average of piety in the colonies was not high. Most of those who came to found homes in the new world were not missionary in spirit. They did not buy slaves to see how much good they could do them. It was the body, not the soul of the African that elicited their interest; his strength to toil, not his capacity for religion that made him attractive. It must not be overlooked, however, that the circumstances were exceedingly unfavorable for any extensive and persistent endeavors to give the Gospel to the negroes. The country was in a formative state, its oldest parts but newly settled, fresh colonists continually coming in, and the older colonists pushing on to fresh conquests of the wilderness. Frequent wars with the Indians, wars with the Dutch, the French, and the Spaniards contributed to the disorder and demoralization of the colonies. Ministers of the Gospel were few, and of necessity not the blacks only but the whites also were neglected.

2. THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE GREAT WARS

For several years after the Revolutionary War its evil effects on religious enterprise were painfully apparent. Among these evil effects was French infidelity, which threw a blight over a wide extent of territory. It was not till the closing years of the century that the religious forces of the country regained something of their lost vigor, and began to make themselves decidedly felt in the lives of the people. In 1799 occurred the great awakening in Kentucky. It continued over quite a period and wrought marvelous changes in large sections of the Southern states. Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists joined in the work of kindling and spreading the revival fires. As one of the results of this spiritual awakening, it is estimated that between three and four thousand negroes were converted.

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The Methodist Church was the first of the denominations to prepare a separate roll for the colored communicants. It began this custom as early as 1786, at which time it reported 1890 colored members. The year following, the number had reached 3893, showing that the Church more than doubled this class of members in twelve months. The Methodists seem to have led all the churches in the persistent, self-denying zeal by which they sought to bring the slaves to a knowledge of salvation. By 1815, they had gathered in as the fruits of this zeal a membership of 43,187. That year there was a defection in the colored membership and an independent Church was organized, known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, under the lead of Richard Allen. This defection, which began in Philadelphia and spread to New York the next year, retarded temporarily the growth of the colored element in the Methodist Church, but did not abate its energies. Not content with having its ministers share their time and labors between white and black, in 1830 missions were commenced for the special benefit of the slave population in the states of South Carolina and Georgia. Six years later, the bishops, in a letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of England, referring to the slaves, say:

In addition to those who are mingled with our white congregations, we have several prosperous missions exclusively for their spiritual benefit, which have been and are still owned of God to the conversion of many precious souls. On the plantations of the South and Southwest our devoted missionaries are laboring for the salvation of the slaves, catechizing their children, and bringing all within their influence, as far as possible, to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and we need hardly add that we shall most gladly avail ourselves, as we have ever done, of all the means in our power to promote their best interests.

A few years later, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church reports:

In no portion of our work are our missionaries called to endure greater privations or make greater sacrifices of health and life than in these missions among the slaves, many of which are located in sections of the Southern country which are proverbially sickly, and under the fatal influence of a climate which few white men are capable of enduring even for a single year. And yet notwithstanding so many valuable missionaries have fallen martyrs to their toils in these missions, year after year there are found others to take their places, who fall likewise in their work; for the love of Christ and the love of the souls of these poor Africans in bonds, constrain our brethren in the itinerant work of the Southern Conferences to exclaim, "here are we, send us."

In the Presbyterian Church the interest awakened by Samuel Davies continued after his departure. The work was taken up later by such distinguished ministers as Dr. Archibald Alexander, and Dr. John Holt Rice. The latter was employed for a time as a special missionary to the blacks. It is a matter of record, that one prominent object which Dr. Rice had in view in devoting himself to the founding of a Theological Seminary in Prince Edward County, Virginia, was that a ministry might be educated at home and fitted for effective service in a field composed of both masters and slaves. The same is true in reference to those through whose initiative the Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, was established and endowed.

In 1817, Hanover Presbytery, Virginia, addressed a circular letter to the churches under its care, solemnly exhorting them not to neglect their duty to their servants. In 1816, the General Assembly was asked: "Ought baptism on the promise of the master be administered to the children of his slaves?" The answer was twofold:

(1) It is the duty of masters who are members of the church, to present the children of parents in servitude to the ordinance of baptism, provided they are in a situation to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, thus securing to them the rich advantages which the gospel promises. (2) It is the duty of

Christian ministers to inculcate this doctrine and to baptize all children of this description when presented to them by their masters.

Both the Congregational and Episcopal Churches gave expression to the same views on this subject. In no way could they bear more signal testimony to the obligation which they recognized as resting on Christian masters to share the blessings of the Gospel with their dependent slaves.

It was the rule of Presbyterian ministers, whose pastorates were in slave-holding sections, to preach to negroes along with the whites, sittings being provided for them in the white churches. They were also accustomed to hold special services for them. By these means they gathered great numbers of colored members into their churches, these frequently far outnumbering the white communicants. White and black were subject to the same entrance test, and afterwards to the same oversight and discipline.

Synods and Presbyteries spent much time in considering methods for reaching the slaves with religious instruction, and in the narratives presented from year to year to these bodies we learn that there was no little activity among the ministry in this behalf. For example, in the narrative of the Synod of Mississippi and Alabama for the year 1834, it is recorded:

All our ministers feel a deep interest in the instruction of the colored part of our population. A few of us, owing to peculiar circumstances, have little opportunity of preaching to them separately and at stated times, but embrace every opportunity that offers; others devote a portion of every Sabbath; others a half of every Sabbath; and two of our number preach exclusively to them.

In South Carolina and Georgia, perhaps also in other states, associations of planters were formed for the special object of affording religious instruction to the negroes, by their own efforts, and by missionaries employed for the

purpose. Those associations were undenominational, bringing to the fellowship of a common work members of all the Evangelical Churches.

The Baptist Church had its beginning in this country in Rhode Island. It was slow in spreading South, but no sooner did it come into contact with the Southern negroes than these showed a decided preference for it. Two things may account for this, apart from their discernment of the superior merits of this Church. First, its mode of administering baptism appealed to their love of the spectacular; and second, its democratic form of government gratified their sense of individual importance. It was difficult to hold them in the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches, if they had an opportunity to desert to the Baptist. Both these Churches had many years the start, and yet, in 1840, Dr. Archibald Alexander writes: "In general the negroes are followers of the Baptists in Virginia." At an early period the Baptists gathered them into churches of their own and placed over them preachers of their own race, not however relinquishing all oversight. A colored Baptist church of sixty-nine members was organized in Savannah, Georgia, in 1788. The pastor was Andrew Bryan, a man of good sense and of zeal unquenchable. When he began to gather the colored people and to exhort them, he was reprimanded and forbidden to continue the practice. When threats did not deter him, he was imprisoned. This failing, he was publicly whipped; whereupon he declared that he rejoiced not only to be whipped, but would gladly suffer death for the cause of Jesus Christ. His apostolic spirit put to shame his adversaries, and he was permitted to pursue his career without further molestation. We have an interesting picture of him as he appeared in his old age.

His fleecy and well-set locks [writes a contemporary] have been bleached by eighty winters; and dressed like a bishop of London, he rides, moderately corpulent, in his chair, and with

manly features of a jetty hue, fills every person to whom he gracefully bows with pleasure and veneration, by displaying in smiles even rows of natural teeth, white as ivory, and a pair of fine black eyes, sparkling with intelligence, benevolence and joy.

It is estimated that by the year 1803, the colored members belonging to the Baptist Church numbered 18,000. Twenty years later the estimate was 40,000. While the white Baptist churches had no societies exclusively for evangelizing the negroes, their associations frequently laid the duty on the hearts and consciences of their people. Multitudes of colored preachers among the African Baptists in the Southern states were preaching to their own color on the plantations. Their preaching was broken and illiterate, but doubtless through this very imperfect medium the truth reached and benefited many souls.

The Episcopal Church fell heir to the interest aroused and the efforts put forth by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. But this Church suffered more than any other from the Revolutionary War. It lost nearly all of its preachers and all its state support, and was left in such a languishing and disorganized condition that for some years it had to devote all its enfeebled energies to strengthening the things which remained and were ready to die. When better days came, it showed in many ways its continued concern for the negroes. Bishops Meade of Virginia and Ives of North Carolina were noted for their efforts to stir up those under their jurisdiction to a faithful discharge of their duties to their slaves. Bishop Dehon of South Carolina was abundant in personal labors, and thus by example as well as by precept encouraged among masters and mistresses in his flock that best kindness to their servants—a concern for their eternal salvation. The Episcopal Convention in South Carolina in 1838, “Resolved, that it is respectfully recommended to the members of our church who are proprietors of slaves, individually and collectively to take measures for the support of

clerical missionaries and lay catechists who are members of our church for the religious instruction of their slaves." And again, "Resolved, that it be urged upon the rectors and vestries of our country parishes to exert themselves to obtain the services of such missionaries and catechists." Carrying out these instructions a number of missionaries were employed who devoted their whole time to work among the negroes, while the clergy generally gave freely of their labor to the instruction of the colored members connected with their churches and conducted regular and flourishing Sabbath schools for colored children.

Some special difficulties deserve to be mentioned. As long as the slave trade continued it was a heavy handicap. The historian Lecky says it was shown in the English Parliament in 1750, when methods of making the traffic more effective were under discussion, that 46,000 slaves were bought annually by the English colonies. It is easy to see how this would greatly increase the difficulties of the work. Every fresh importation of Africans was adding a fresh mass of raw heathenism to the slave population, and this retarded the modifying effect of all previous efforts for their evangelization. It was like pouring a fresh tributary of muddy water into a stream that was beginning to clear. These newcomers were of a mature age and would never acquire a sufficient knowledge of the English language to make it easy to reach them with religious instruction. Among them were witch doctors, medicine men, who kept alive the worst features of their native superstitions. They competed with the Christian missionaries and had the advantage of constant contact and the natural bent of the African mind. Voodooism exists to this day, and still plays an important part in the social and religious life of the negroes.

Another complication was the disposition of the slaves to insurrection which had to be closely watched. In 1822, a serious conspiracy was formed in Charleston, South Carolina, under the direction of a slave by the name of Vesey,

which contemplated the massacre of all the whites in the city. It came near realization, but the conspirators were betrayed and Vesey and his associates were hanged. Less than ten years elapsed before the famous Nat Turner insurrection occurred in Virginia, in which fifty-five white persons were murdered. This spread terror all over the South and had a decided effect in the way of curtailing the religious privileges of the negroes. Both Vesey and Turner had been able to organize and mature their plots through the medium of negro congregations which met ostensibly for worship. Both were earnest students of the Bible, and taught their people that they were in the same relation to God as the Jews of old, and as the Jews were authorized of God to exterminate the Canaanites, so it was the divine will that they should destroy the whites and enter into their possessions. In consequence of these insurrections, legislation was passed forbidding negroes to preach and prohibiting their free assembly for public worship.

This state of apprehension was greatly aggravated by the course of abolition sentiment in certain sections of the North. This sentiment grew violent in its expression, and was directed not merely against slavery as an institution but against all owners of slaves. No language was thought too intemperate to characterize their inhumanity. This aroused both indignation and alarm. It turned the attention of masters largely from the religious needs of their slaves, and set them on expedients for guarding against apprehended dangers. Laws were passed in many of the states forbidding the teaching of negroes to read. This made the Bible a sealed book to the negro, except as it was taught orally. It greatly weakened the efficiency of Sabbath schools for the same reason. All catechetical instruction had to be given orally, and repeated until the slow mind of the negro by oft-hearing was able to retain at least a portion in memory. The South was barred to preachers or missionaries from other sections. Masters were exceedingly suspicious of

outside influence, and only ministers known to be in sympathy with pro-slavery views were given access to the negroes. The South became a very uncomfortable place for those who in any form abetted the abolition movement. The Synod of the Associate Church in 1840 addressed a letter to congregations in the South, setting forth their duties with respect to emancipation. The Moderator of the Synod was sent to read this letter to the congregations. The result was a riot in one of the congregations in South Carolina, and the violent expulsion of the preacher from the state. A yet more tragic experience was that of a student from Lane Seminary. He was spending his vacation selling Bibles in Nashville, Tennessee, and in the surrounding country. Unfortunately he used copies of Garrison's *Liberator* to wrap his Bibles so as to protect them from injury while he was hauling them around in his buggy. Some one happening to notice this, jumped to the conclusion that Bible selling was a mere ruse. The young man was soon in the hands of an infuriated mob. His life was saved by the intervention of a few influential men of more moderate and reasonable dispositions. But they had to consent to a compromise. The young man was whipped by the sheriff on his naked back in the public square and then hurried out of the community.

This inflamed state of feeling was very unfavorable to missionary labors in behalf of the blacks. Self-preservation was the matter of first concern, and even those masters who felt most sensibly their obligations to the souls of their slaves exercised a strict vigilance to keep the negroes from contact with teachers who might stir them to discontent. The great Methodist Church, ever the ardent friend of the black man, came near to shutting the door of opportunity in its face. By its strong deliverances against slavery in its General Conferences, it put a heavy handicap on its preachers in the South. They were regarded by many with grave suspicion and in a few instances they were the victims of persecution by the lawless elements of society. It was a

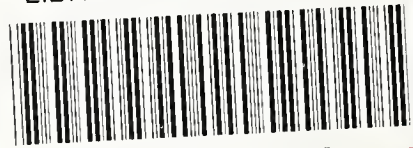


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